

"Oh, our newspapers, and he's been a sort of recluse all his life."

"No harm in trying," said Dayton. "I'll just drop him a line."

In the mail two mornings later came the answer. Dayton opened it in the presence of Ives. It was a printed slip which read:

Lord Frampton appreciates your courtesy. He regrets that age and the state of his health make it impossible for him personally to thank you.

"I thought so," said Ives, not concealing his delight at Dayton's discomfiture. "He sends that to everybody who tries to intrude upon him."

Dayton mechanically turned the printed slip over. "What's this?" he said. There was written in a feeble, cramped hand:

My Dear Sir—I am lunching at the Athenaeum club the day after tomorrow (Thursday) and shall be pleased to see you there afterward—at 3.

FRAMPTON.

Dayton thrust the note into his pocket, concealing his feeling of triumph. "I may cable what he says—if it's worth while. It might make a good feature for them on Sunday." And he went away.

Ives looked after him, dazed. "Yet there are some people who say there's no such thing as luck!" he grumbled. "Who'd have thought old Frampton had gone stark mad?"

At the Carlton Dayton found a telegram:

Shall be at Claridge's tomorrow. Be sure to come at 3 precisely.

ELSIE GRANT.

"Whatever shall I do?" he said after he had reread the telegram and Lord Frampton's note to make sure. Both for Thursday; both at the same hour. I can't put either of them off. What shall I do with Foss?"

No; Foss could not be put off. He must be seen at the time he had appointed or the great Sunday feature would be lost. "I must send some one in my place. But who? It must be a newspaper man, a man with the newspaper instinct and training; it must be a man of the best possible address and up in philosophy and sociology and Foss. Where can I get him?"

It seemed absurd to think on such a problem, yet after nearly an hour Dayton jumped up and said, "Why, of course—just the man—better than I could possibly do it myself," and began fumbling in a compartment of the trunk that was full of letters, papers and cards. He soon found what he was searching for—a card bearing the address of Henry Carpenter. A common friend in New York had given it to him, saying: "Look Carpenter up and, if you can, put something in his way. I hear he's badly off."

As Dayton said to himself, Henry Carpenter was probably the best equipped man in the world for an interview with Foss for an American newspaper. He was a Yale man with a Ph. D. from Gottingen, and a writer on economic subjects who had won some fame. But philosophy is not profitable, and Carpenter made his living as a newspaper reporter. He had been one of the cleverest in the profession, then had married and taken to drink and gone to the bottom.

The address on the card was in the

far end of Pimlico. Dayton bet out, calling at the Victoria. There were several New York newspaper men in the lounge. He asked them if they had seen Carpenter. "Just left him," said one. "He was bound for the Criterion." Dayton drove to the Criterion and began a search of the crowded rooms. He soon saw Carpenter wandering about the bar, noting each face as if he were looking for an acquaintance. His clothes, his very expression, proclaimed poverty and failure, and Dayton, knowing his habits, was particularly impressed by the weakness of his chin. But in spite of the air of "hard luck" Carpenter looked the gentleman, the man of superior intelligence. He greeted Dayton effusively, and as soon as the business was disclosed eagerly offered his services.

"There's only one difficulty—will Lord Frampton receive you when he is expecting me?"

"We'll have to take our chances on that," said Carpenter.

"But I never take chances if I can help it. I've been thinking—he doesn't know me and he doesn't know you. Why shouldn't you send in one of my cards—impersonate me?"

Carpenter's face brightened.

"Yes; that is the best plan," continued Dayton. "With your special knowledge you'll do the interview far better than I could. He'll really profit by the deception."

It was so agreed, and Carpenter went away, Dayton advancing him two sovereigns. When he returned the next afternoon his appearance was in every way satisfactory, and Dayton's last misgivings disappeared. He went with Carpenter to the Athenaeum. "It's a little early, old man, but you can send in your—or, rather, my—card and wait. And don't forget you're both under assumed names. If you are calling yourself Dayton when you're Carpenter, isn't he calling himself Frampton when he's Foss?"

"You may rely on me. I'll do my best," said Carpenter.

He saw Carpenter enter the clubhouse; saw him give his card to the attendant. Not until then did he drive away. His heart was light. Fate had been kind to him. On the stroke of 3 he was in the writing room at Claridge's. Elsie did not keep him waiting. "Mother has changed her plans," she said, hurrying in. "I thought we'd have a clear hour, but she may be back at any moment."

He was looking at her steadily. "Well?" he asked.

She flushed and cast down her eyes. Then she lifted them and returned his gaze steadfastly. "Yes," she said.

He gave a long sigh.

They were silent for a few minutes.

"Mother"—she began.

"She will not consent?"

"It's of no use to ask her. You know that."

He nodded cheerfully. "But we don't need her consent. You're of age."

"What do you suggest?"

"Well, I had arranged—in case you accepted and your mother wouldn't have it—that we should marry at the American consul general's. He's an old friend of mine and has promised to at-

tend to everything for me. All we have to do is to let him know when we're coming. He's even got an American preacher at hand."

She laughed. "And when did you dare to do this?"

"Yesterday, as soon as I had your telegram. It wasn't daring, was it, to assume that you meant what your telegram implied?"

"Whatever it was or was not, I like it."

"I thought," he continued, "that we would better marry in some way that would leave her a chance to come around quietly afterward."

"Yes, that is better than going to Scotland," said Elsie reflectively.

Dayton laughed. "And who dared to think out an elopement away off to Scotland?" he said.

Elsie was still blushing when her mother came in. Dayton invited them to dinner and the theater, and Mrs. Grant accepted.

At 8 the next morning, as Dayton had finished shaving and was going into his bath, there was a knock at the outer door of his sitting room.

"What is it?" he called.

"A gentleman to see you, sir," came through the door.

"Carpenter," he said to himself. Then to the servant: "Show him up, please. Bring him to the sitting room and tell him I will see him directly."

With this he unlocked the outer door and went back through the bedroom into his bathroom. Soon he heard the outer door open and the servant showing his caller in. When he had bathed he returned to the bedroom. The portiere was drawn across the door into the sitting room. He could wait no longer. "I say, old man," he shouted, "did you get a good yarn?"

There was a sharp rustling, then silence. He went to the portiere and threw it back and stood in the doorway, his bathrobe half open, his face and neck red from the cold water, his hair tumbled. He was transfixed. Before him, gazing at him, sat an old man, a study in the black of broadcloth and the white of linen and skin and wool-like hair and side whiskers. His head was wagging and his mouth ajar as he stared stupidly at Dayton. He raised himself with the aid of a gold-headed cane and put up his eyeglass. "I must apologize to you," he quavered. "I'm so disturbed that I hardly know what I'm about this morning. I fancied I was in the rooms of a Mr. Fenimore Dayton."

"I'm Fenimore Dayton," said Dayton. And then a horrible thought flashed into his mind.

The old man's mouth had flown open again. "What?" he exclaimed. "Impossible!"

Dayton, all the blood in his body in his face, stood there unable to speak.



"What?" he exclaimed. "Impossible!" or move. "Great heavens," he thought, "what shall I do? What has Carpenter been up to?"

Lord Frampton passed his hand over his face. "Impossible!" he muttered. "Incredible!" And again he rubbed his face confusedly. "Tell me," he looked strangely at Dayton, "did you or did you not have a talk with me at the Athenaeum club yesterday in the afternoon?"

Dayton opened his mouth several times before he could articulate, "I did not—that is—"

"Then who was it? Where is he?"

Lord Frampton looked angrily around. "I insist upon an explanation, sir!"

"Excuse me just a few minutes. I must finish dressing. I was and I wasn't there. I'll explain." Dayton withdrew to the bedroom, pulling the portiere over the doorway.

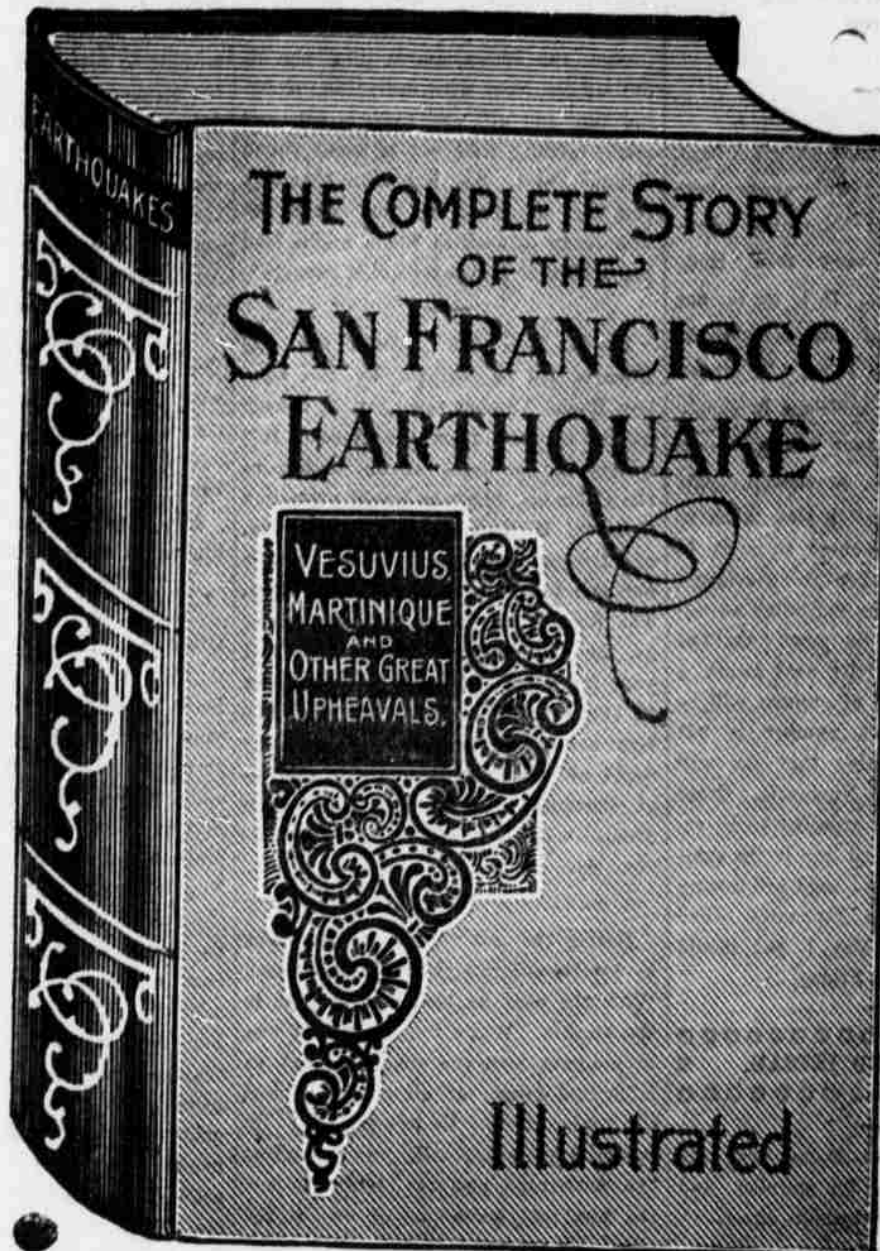
He hurried into his clothes and returned to the sitting room. He stood before Lord Frampton, looking ashamed, repentant, honest. "I am going to make a clean breast of it, sir," he said. "I could not keep my engagement with you yesterday. I did not wish to lose the interview. I sent a perfectly competent man, thinking it made no difference to you, as you did not know me or care especially who did the interview, so long as it was done properly."

"But where is he? Where is he?" Lord Frampton tapped his cane angrily on the floor.

"I—I don't know, sir. I—"

(To be continued in our next issue)

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